

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: John Perreira, 72, former plantation store manager,
Paia

*"God, that store, shee. That store have everything under the sun.
I'm not kidding. They had everything under the sun that you could
practically think of. I'm not kidding you."*

John Perreira, Portuguese, was born March 23, 1907, in Makawao, Maui.
His father was a luna for MA Company. They moved to Paia when Perreira
was ten years old.

While attending high school at St. Anthony's, Perreira worked during
summers. He was a water boy in the sugarcane fields and a tray boy in
the pineapple cannery. After graduating, he got a job as a delivery boy
with Paia Store in 1926.

In 1935, he was transferred to the office of Paia Store. In 1939, Perreira
became assistant manager of the grocery department. Two years later, he
became manager of the dry goods department.

In 1951, Perreira was promoted to manager of Paia Store. He remained in that
position until 1959, when he transferred to A&B Commercial Company in Kahului.
He retired in 1969.

Perreira passed away in January, 1980, prior to the second scheduled interview.

Tape No. 7-3-1-79 and 7-4-1-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

John Perreira (JP)

October 5, 1979

Paia, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. John Perreira. Today is October 5, 1979. And we're at his home in Paia, Maui.

Okay, Mr. Perreira, can we start by telling us where you were born, and when you were born?

JP: Well, I was born in the Makawao district on March the twenty-third, 1907. Quite a number of years back.

WN: Can you tell me something about your parents?

JP: Well, my dad was born out here. My mother came from Portugal when she was a little girl, about five years old. We actually lived way up close to Makawao. And from there, dad moved down to what they---camp was Kaheka. My boyhood days, I would say up to ten years old, was in the Kaheka section. Then we moved down to Paia. Dad worked for the old M.A. [Maui Agricultural] Company, which was a separate plantation. Actually, the two plantations were owned by the Baldwins--two brothers like. When Harry died, that's when they--for a couple of years--then they merged with HC&S [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company] and made one whole unit.

WN: This was in 1948?

JP: Well, somewhere around there. But prior to that, I attended school in the old Paia--the building is still there--old Paia School. And then from there, I went down to St. Anthony.

WN: Okay. Did your father---when he came from Portugal . . .

JP: He did not. Mother came from Portugal when she was about five years old.

WN: Uh huh. And your father worked in the fields?

JP: My father was born out here. And he worked for M.A. Company in the

fields. Those days, they didn't call them supervisors. They called them lunas. He worked for M.A. Company, see. That's before the merger. He worked up, oh, until nineteen The war broke out in 1941. Dad died in 1940. That's when he . . .

WN: You said your mom came over when

JP: She was about five years old. That's when she came. And what education she had was very little or nothing. Because she could tell you, "Good morning," "Hello," or "Wait, I'll call someone," but as far as education was concerned, she had none to speak of. Dad, I'm pretty sure Oh, I don't remember what kind education he had, but I don't think he had much education in those days. You know, when kids grew up, their old parents want to put 'em to (chuckles) work, eh? That's what happens. So, really to tell you the truth, I don't know what kind education He died a young man. He died at fifty-nine.

WN: When you were a child growing up, how did he raise you?

JP: My brother and I--Manuel and myself--I would say, compared to today, he had the iron fist, yeah? Either you would do, or you would get it--one of the two. There wasn't any such thing as you come [home] from school, and, hell, you disappear. No.

He had a milking cow. In fact, he had two, but he always had one at home. We never bought any milk. We never bought any butter. Mother made all our butter. He also had two horses he used to use. In his job, those days, there weren't cars there. On horseback, through the cane fields--you know, like I told you--as a luna, called in those days, which is an equivalent to a supervisor today. And we had to feed those cows--which they kept 'em close to the house--and the horses. Every day we used to go cut those big, brown burlap bags that barley used to come in it. We used to go cut two for the horses every day and two for the cows.

He was huge. My dad was about six feet, three [inches], and he weighed about 240 pounds. Well, we were youngsters. You know, you go cut grass; you want to play a little, eh? [Dad] come home.

"Where's the grass?"

Go over there, hold that sack. He put his hand--bang! To us (chuckles), it's full. He goes down halfway.

WN: He stuffed his hand inside the bag?

JP: Yeah. Because he want two good [full] bags of grass for the horses. Goes like this, to go down less than half.

"Go cut some more grass."

Had to go cut some more grass. He made us a wagon. If you recall these old wheelbarrows? With the metal wheel? In fact, I have one metal wheel hanging on the tree. He got four of those. Where he got it from, I don't know. He made us a wagon. We pull, eh? Go out cut the grass, tie 'em on this wagon. It held four or five bags with ease. You know, you pile 'em up right; tie 'em. Heck, instead of go cut grass, we go play with it first. Find a good hill, ride. Then it [gets] little dark. Then you forget. Then you go cut grass, and that's where we---our troubles, see? You know what I mean. We didn't cut enough grass. Just put 'em slightly in the bags, eh?

WN: Did he ever catch you folks playing around in the wagon?

JP: Yeah. One time he caught We were playing. We just got through playing. My brother was smoking. He used to smoke. God, did we have a beating from him, boy. Shee. He didn't hesitate.

WN: You mean, physical beating?

JP: No, no, not. Yeah, but he used a strap on us. Big, white strap. My God. He doesn't beat you two, three times--anywhere from ten to fifteen strappings you get at one crack from him. Well, anyway, today I'm glad. You know what I mean? You look at the kids today. You can't control 'em. Kids in those days, they listened to their parents and everything.

WN: What other kind of chores did you have when you were young?

JP: Well, he had some pigs which was for the house use. We used to go, oh, about quarter of a mile away. Not only my parents, but quite a few people--all nationalities--had pigs, you know. The plantation provided a section with water. Each guy raised one or two for home use. Dad made all our own. We never bought any sausages. We never bought any salt pork. He made 'em all. Oh, he made the whole thing by himself. And we used to do that.

Outside of that Well, came Saturday, came Sunday. Sunday morning we used to go to church. Saturday, after we got enough grass for the animals, and Sunday, we were allowed to go to play. But he always had one firm rule. Dinner time, you home at 5 o'clock [p.m.] or you don't eat dinner. That was his rule. I don't care what--unless there was some kind of emergency or something, then. Outside of that, you come back 5:30, 6:00, I'm sorry for you, my friend. You going without dinner. Unless on the sly---mother sly us, you know. Maybe a little food on the side, but God help us if he (chuckles) caught us with that. But outside of that, I think he was a nice Joe to me. Really, I think he was nice Joe.

WN: When he was raising the pigs and so forth, was this in Kaheka or was this in Paia?

JP: This was in Kaheka. Before we moved to Paia, I think. I think we moved down--I was about thirteen or fourteen years old [1920], around there--and then when we moved down to Paia, the plantation also provided space. He raised some hogs there. Everything was for home use. Never more than two or three hogs at a time. Not only him. Quite a number of people that raised hogs over there for their home use. We took care of that and took care of the yard.

WN: The housing that you lived in, was it . . .

JP: Was provided by the plantation--M.A. Company. And lights, what we paid was a dollar [per month] for lights. Water was free. (Chuckles) All the wood---people, those days, didn't have hot water heaters. You know, they made these wood-burning heaters out in the back, someplace. The plantation provided all the wood you wanted. You know what I mean. To heat the water and everything--we took care of that.

I remember that in back, we had a pretty good-sized lot. He had quite a number of papayas. What I pay for papayas today, and when I think of those papayas, it's a crime. Actually, he raised papayas to feed the pig. They were sweet papayas, now. That I recall--they were sweet papayas. I say, heck, he must have had 'em in that back lot anywhere from, oh, thirty-five to fifty trees.

WN: Sounds like you had a big lot . . .

JP: Oh, we had a big lot back, you know. The house was towards the front quite a bit. Just like mine [JP's present home], only reverse. You get what I mean? In other words, the other home, the main road, was on this side, with a big lot behind. Mine is just the reverse. The big lot is in the front, and the narrow piece is back here, you see? We had a good-sized lot over there. Well, there was quite a number of homes over there.

WN: That camp that you lived in, ethnically, was it mixed?

JP: Well, it was mixed to a certain extent. That [where JP grew up] was called the "Skill Village." In that Skill Village, they had some Hawaiian people, Portuguese people. There were two Russian families in there. And I recall there were Kanemitsu and I can't remember the other Japanese name in that section. Kanemitsu was his name. Because the camps were sort of divided like. They had what they called the Skill Village; they had the Orpheum Camp, which was practically only Filipinos. Then they had Nashiwa Camp, which was Japanese.

WN: What camp was this?

JP: Nashiwa. N-A- . . .

WN: It's named after the bakery?

JP: Right. The bakery was right in the corner--I showed you the place. That whole section was Nashiwa Bakery.

WN: So they named the camp after Nashiwa?

JP: I think they named 'em after Nashiwa. And then, across the street, there was another big Japanese camp. Above that, they had a Honeymoon Camp. The Honeymoon Camp was mixed nationality. The other camps, it's mostly Japanese. Then it came down, it was Spanish Camp, was strictly---that Spanish Camp, the Hawaiian Camp was Hawaiians. A few Chinese, a few Spanish people. And it came right around, see? You get what I mean? That's how they named those camps.

WN: "And you came right around"--what do you mean?

JP: It came right around and came back to the main highway [Baldwin Avenue]. That was the camps, you see? [See map section.]

WN: How far back away from the mill would the camps go?

JP: Oh, right above the mill, the camps started. You know, you take like Skill Village, it started, from the mill, I would say about 300 yards at the most. Then Nashiwa was way up in the corner about, what, quarter of a mile from there. And then, on this side, oh, I would say less than quarter of a mile, the whole camp was situated in one spot.

WN: Was it surrounding the mill?

JP: No, no, no. Not surround the mill--was down here, see? In other words, the mill was here. Let's say this, the mill is here. Skill Village started up here.

WN: Above the mill.

JP: Above the mill. Then it went into the Orpheum Camp. Then it went across the road, and then it came down.

WN: The mill was actually the lowest

JP: The mill was the lowest portion below the camps. That's what it was.

WN: Were there any houses below the mill at all [i.e., toward Lower Paia]?

JP: Yes, there was. This section that I'm living in [JP's present home]. These homes were here, with the exception of one, two, three homes. This went all the way down, I would say, another quarter of a mile. But there wasn't too many homes here. I would say, at the most, oh, twelve to fifteen homes. That belonged to

the old M.A. Company Plantation.

WN: And everything below those homes were private . . .

JP: Privately owned.

WN: And that goes down to Lower Paia?

JP: That goes down to Lower Paia and all that section in there.

WN: You were naming some names of villages, like Skill Village and Honeymoon Village. Do you know how they got their names?

JP: That I couldn't tell you. Honest. Well, I'll tell. Like you take Hawaiian Village. They named the Hawaiian Village because there was quite a lot of Hawaiians in there. Now, Spanish Camp, they had quite a number of Spanishes up there. But the funny thing, like the Honeymoon Camp, they named "Honeymoon Camp" because they made a bunch of homes up there, which is no more--they break them all down. And these newly couples, most of them I don't know how the heck they went off in there. So, they named it after them. You take that Filipino camp that I mentioned--that Orpheum Camp. Why they name it, I would say, because between that camp and the Skill Village, there was--below that camp, rather--there was the theater (own by Paschael) there. They named 'em after the theater, using off the---I don't know. And then, between the theater and the Skill Village Camp that goes out, there was a huge baseball park over there. You know, regular were there. Quite a number of games in there all the time. And then there was Kaheka. Why they named it "Kaheka Village" beats me. I couldn't find sense

WN: How about Skill Village? Did that have anything to do the type of workers working there?

JP: Yeah. The Skill Village was more in the type of workers [who] were working in the company in skill lines like They named it after form of a skilled village, see.

WN: And your father was one of the skilled workers?

JP: Well, in those days, you were a luna. And when I first got married, I was working in Paia Store, which belonged to the [M.A.] company. They gave me a house in there. I lived next to a party. Then next to Old Man English, there was an open lot like. They built a two-bedroom house for my wife and I.

WN: Who was this? Old Man who?

JP: Heine English. Too bad that bugga died many years ago. Old Man Heine English. He was an old-timer. He was in charge of the garage--repairing cars before the merger [of HC&S and M.A. Company

in 1948]. So, I can tell you that much. But why they named some camps like "Kaheka" beats me. They had another camp right up Pahule. That's where the manager's home is. Beautiful place up in the hill like, you know. And there is an old mill. They built the manager's house right above this old mill. Well, the only things standing is part of the walls.

WN: Is this up H. Poko [Hamakua Poko]?

JP: Up below Haliimaile. Below the pineapple company. Oh, I would say, from here, maybe 3-1/2 miles at the most. From the sugar mill, 3-1/2 to 4 miles at the most. That's where they built the manager's home. There's that old sugar mill, still standing there. When that sugar mill was in operation, I don't know. Then in addition to that, they had Hamakua Poko Camp. Again, how they named it "Hamakua Poko" beats me. I don't know. That was a good-sized camp. They had a branch store over there in Hamakua Poko.

WN: M.A. Company had a branch store?

JP: Yeah, they had a branch store there [Hamakua Poko]. And they also I showed you. You remember we took a ride? With the vines were growing over that old mill [Hamakua Poko Mill]? They don't allow anybody in there, you know. The walls are collapsing and all. I think they were operating that mill, I would say about, oh God, around the 1880s to 1890s around.

WN: Late 1800s [1879-1906]?

JP: I think so. Around there, someplace. That was a good-sized camp, you know. The old Maui High [School] is up there. We passed it, if you remember. And that---oh God, that was built when? God knows how long ago, I don't know. They have closed that [Maui High School] and moved down to Dream City [Kahului] where they centralized the thing. And that's where the new Maui High is. I know they had that camp there [Hamakua Poko], but how far that camp went, I don't know. You know what I mean. When it started; how it got it's name. I don't know. But I know there were mixed nationality in there. I don't care what nationality--they were all mixed in there.

WN: So Maui High was basically a school for camp children?

JP: No, no. Maui High was open to the public. Maui High was open . . .

WN: Yeah, but was it . . .

JP: Well, they came from all over. Naturally, there was Paia [Elementary] School; there was Makawao [Elementary] School. There was Kawanoa [English Standard] School. There was a few other schools. When they graduated [from elementary school], that's where they went [Maui High School]. They either went there, or they went St. Anthony.

Follow what I mean? So, actually, it wasn't for only one group of people that for they had, no. It was not.

WN: So, where did the Kahului kids go to high school?

JP: Paia or St. Anthony. You see, there was two . . .

WN: To Maui [High] and St. Anthony?

JP: Yeah. And then, when they build Baldwin High [in Wailuku], they sort of divided it, you know. Kids from, I think, they were from Kahului. You should check in that. They were divided, and they either had to go to Baldwin High or St. Anthony. This section, all up in here, came to Maui High, up on this section, which was Camp 1, Kula, Makawao, Haiku, all of that. They went to Maui High up there. That's what it was.

WN: You were talking about Skill Village, and you were talking about the size of your home. Were all the homes in that village about that size?

JP: God, those homes in that Skill Village, two-thirds of those homes were really large, comfortable homes. From three to four bedrooms. I don't think there was one house in there with a one bedroom. Impossible. I don't think there was any there. They were either three or four. And they were comfortable. That's the first place that I seen electricity--in other words, electric lights.

WN: So, from the time you were living there, about 1920 . . .

JP: When we moved from Kaheka to Paia, I was a youngster still going to public school.

WN: This was about when? Nineteen twenty [1920]?

JP: Um. God, I would say, maybe a little early than that. You know what I mean? Maybe it'd be a little earlier than that.

WN: Do you remember how old you were?

JP: God, I don't remember how old I was, but I do remember that we used to sit down and just watch the lights. Nobody put on lights but my dad when he came home. (Chuckles) He didn't allow. After we got used to putting switches on, we were kids. The mynah birds used to perch on the wires outside, and one of us used to run in the house, throw the switch on to see the damn thing if it died. I was a youngster. How old I was, I really don't know.

WN: Was the Skill Camp the only camp that had electricity?

JP: As far as M.A. Company was concerned, the Paia section, that's the first place they started. They kept going, kept going, kept going,

to all the camps. Because they only had one bunch of electricians. That I remember well. To tell you the truth, God, it must have been about Oh, hell, schnell, I don't know. Fifteen, maybe around there, roughly.

WN: Fifteen years old?

JP: I remember we used to go in the ditch and swim. That's where I learned to swim. Big lorry ditch from the plantation.

WN: Nearby to your home?

JP: Oh, heck, about--from here to the road--about 200 feet away at the most. Not only me, but quite a number of kids. Hawaiian kids. We used to go swimming in the ditch. Then go in the tunnel after fish. See, those days, cane was brought in to the mill by a locomotive. These cars brought in anywhere from five to six tons. Four wheels and they had sort of a grease rack close to the wheel with (tape garbled) full of grease to supply oil. We used to go steal that out with wires. Wrap 'em in something, make torches out it, go in the tunnel after fish. We used to . . .

WN: What kind of fish did you catch?

JP: Well, common fish. You know what I mean. They were black, red . . .

WN: 'O'opu?

JP: Yeah, there were some 'o'opus in there. The big-headed buggas, you know. That I recall very, very well. Jesus, I must have been around fifteen, I think. I would say, in that neighborhood, at the best.

WN: So you said you went to St. Anthony's?

JP: Yes. When I got through with [elementary] school, I went to St. Anthony.

WN: First, you going to Paia . . .

JP: I went to Paia School. From Paia School, I went to St. Anthony's School. I graduated from there. And then I went to work for Kahului Store. I worked there for about a month. Oh, prior to that, let's go back a little. I used to work in a . . .

WN: Let's back up a little. You graduated from St. Anthony's in 1925. While you were going to St. Anthony, you worked in the cane fields?

JP: I worked in the cane fields as what they call the water boy. I carried two bags like an old coolie working in the rice fields. Then, after that, I went to the cannery.

WN: Wait. First of all, can you describe what it was like working as a

water boy?

JP: Well, it wasn't bad when you work for the right gang. But when you work for a Filipino gang, God, those so-and-sos were a thirsty bunch. And at times, you have to walk far, too. We used to go get the water from the ditches. But the water was regular drinking water. Only times it was dirty and stuff, but the water was nice and clean.

But one year, I worked and I caught Filipino was hard. Then, year after that, I caught a Chinese gang. Still at thirty-five cents an hour--I mean, a day, rather. Excuse me. Those Chinese never drank water--never. And they never carried a lunch can. I didn't carry a lunch can after the first day neither. Ten o'clock during the day, the Chinese were They lived in long houses in the camp, and they did the cooking over there. About ten o'clock, the plantation supplied a cart to take this food for them. All cooked. Two big tubs were rice. One was rice and one was the ingredients. Just like what the Japanese call "gochisō," eh? (Laughs) And the other one was tea. That was ten o'clock. As soon as that food get there [the fields], they quit, right there. All you did was pour water, and they wash their hands. You know, clean their face a little. One party serve, you know. Something like a buffet-style, but only one party serve. I also went in the line. I never took lunch can ever since then. That was good. Only two of these bags of water--was enough for a whole day. Whether it was blazing hot They never drank water as far as I remember.

WN: Was it just the Chinese that did . . .

JP: That's the Chinese do. That I remember well. They used to load these cars that brought the cane down to the mill with a locomotive. Most of those people that loaded that cane--the cane was hand cut--and they call this hāpai kō men. They were practically all Japanese people. They put it [sugar cane] in piles, grab it up on their shoulder. They had long planks because those cars had high sideboards, see? Oh, these boards was about twelve feet, I guess.

WN: Twelve feet long? How wide was it?

JP: Yeah. Oh, about that much. I don't think it was more than ten inches wide. And had pieces across, sort of a support that you don't slide. And they loaded those cars. They had what they call the ticket boy. He came by and everybody had a number. You know what I mean?

WN: A bangō?

JP: A bangō. You loaded as he came by. They had couple of them. He would take your number and the car number, put it in this tag. Each car had a metal--oh, I'd say about, maybe two inches by three

inches--very narrow stuff that he slip that in there. With your number and the car number loaded. Then when the cane came down to the mill, they had another party there weighing all that cars. As the cars came in, they clip on a scale. So, that guy picked those numbers had 'em in order. And as they came, the car number, his ticket match. So he put the weight. That weight was set to weigh only the cane. The whole car went in, but they knew what the weight of the car was. Roughly. That's all he did. Then from there, that went to the office. That's where they computed the whole thing.

WN: That's how they got paid?

JP: That's how they got paid. They got paid once a month. Those days, were all in cash. In addition to that, they had also coupons. You work for the plantation, you didn't have to worry about cash. You know, if you didn't have any money or you had a few dollars. So, you go to the main office and you go see the timekeeper. Was an old man by the name of Robinson.

You go there, "I want ten dollars or fifteen dollars worth of coupons." Say, they say, "I want fifteen dollar coupon."

"Hey, I'm sorry. I cannot give you fifteen dollars. All you work so far is twelve dollars worth. So, I'll give you ten."

Cannot help. You got to take the ten, eh? But if you work already where you have accumulated, you can go anytime you want. If you have accumulated twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two dollars, you want twenty dollars, he give you the twenty.

WN: All right, is this before payday?

JP: Yeah, long before payday. This maybe . . .

WN: So, you could actually get an advance?

JP: Yeah, something like an advance. Maybe about the fifteenth of the month. Got to buy groceries, so you go there. The plantation accepted that [coupons] as cash. They accepted that as face value. Dollar for dollar, you know. They [plantation workers] paid for the groceries with that.

WN: First, you would go to the office, ask them for . . .

JP: See the timekeeper who was Old Man Robinson.

WN: Then you would ask for, say, "I need ten dollars." On the spot. You would ask them for a ten dollar coupon?

JP: You asking---you tell 'em, gee, you want some money.

"I want ten dollars worth of coupons."

Immediately, he open his time book. In his time book, he has your number and he know how much you make so far. So, when he open that, well, you ask for ten, if you got sixteen, no questions asked. He just write in there. Just like you go to a bank and borrow. But you don't pay interest.

WN: At payday time, you would get ten dollars less?

JP: If you worked and you got thirty-five dollars, all you going to get is twenty-five And it shows your deductions.

WN: When you were a water boy, how much water would one of those sacks carry?

JP: One of those bags? Maybe, oh, I would say, 2 to 2-1/2--in each sack--gallons of water. Because they were flat. You must have seen these bags. They were flat--you can't fill it up too full. It spilled. I would say, each bag carried around 2-1/2 plus, maybe.

WN: How would you carry them?

JP: Just like an old coolie. With cross stick around. One in the front, one in the back. And you carry that. Sometimes, you walk far. Sometimes, it wasn't far. But when you get back--where your men are--you try and hide the bags. Not that you didn't care if they want to drink water. Try and hide it from the sun, so the water be cool, eh? No ice, those days, you see. In addition to that, plantation had cane that went all the way up to Pulehu and Waiakoa, which is miles from here. At times, when it was real far, and water was a little scarce, they used to bring a water tank up there. Park it on the road. We used to walk anywhere from 100 feet to quarter mile, or something like that. Fill up water, take it back. That was nice. We didn't have to walk far. (Laughs) That was really nice. Because the plantation had all kind of camps. You want to go back a little--like I told you--they had Pulehu; they had Waiakoa. They had Pulehu, Waiakoa, Keahua. From Keahua, they had Kailua Camp. Keahua, Kailua, and old Kailua Camp. The small camps they had. They had a few more that I can't . . .

WN: Pahule?

JP: Yeah. Pahule. That's where that camp--that's many years back--that's where they build the manager's home up in that section, now.

WN: How many times would you--in one day--fill up those water sacks?

JP: It all depend on the sun. How hot the day was. But I would say, on an average, maybe two times in the morning. Let's call it a regular day, not a blazing, hot day, and not a cool day, neither.

Normal day. I would say, about twice in the morning, and once or twice in the afternoon.

WN: What would you do while they were working and nobody wanted water? Would you just stand around?

JP: Stand by. Sit down. Get yourself a piece of cane, skin 'em, chew on 'em. (Laughs) That's what we used to do, eh? You see, the teams were scattered. Let's say, if there was two or three water boys working on that field because there had number of teams cutting cane and all of that. It was hard for us to come together and hold conversations because one team wasn't here, the next team wasn't right there. They were maybe, 100, 200 feet away, eh? Hell, you don't want them yell at you. So, we stayed out I got fired once.

WN: As a water boy?

JP: Yeah, as a water boy. As a water boy, you get up [in the morning], you go to the bell house--bell house was the waiting place. The train used to come up there with a bunch of cars parked. Let's say that we were going to Old Kailua and work. I was water boy that year for a man by the name Jules. Portuguese man. He was . . .

WN: First name or last name?

JP: All we know 'em was Old Man Jules. You never spoke to those guys with your hat on, my friend. They were bosses. You take off your hat. He gave me his lunch can. The water boy carried the luna's lunch can. He give you the lunch can. And he spoke only Portuguese, practically. Right in the train, we went to way up Keahua and work. You know when you ride one of those cane cars, it shakes and you know what I mean. I don't care which way you hold the lunch can, if there's something, and it's pretty well filled, you know what's going to happen. I was holding his can with my can on the other side, my bags. I reach up there, God, then there was yellow substance right around the can. Oh, my God, what the heck is this? To me, see, I look at this.

I say, "There's nothing I can do."

When you eat breakfast, you used to have lunch. So, whatever food you have, you split, see. And they used that regular--you seen those cans, underneath the rice and the on-top section was about

WN: Oh, the layered can?

JP: Yeah. Where they put the stuff. His wife made stew. And she filled that thing up to the brim. So, you know what happened, eh? When it starts shaking, it starts spilling. God, when he seen that, he got mad.

I told 'em, "I cannot help. The train that pulling that car, that car shakes. What can I do? I can't hold anything."

He told me in Portuguese, "You go home. There's no more job for you."

I came home. I walked. Half of the way down. Then somebody picked me up. I came home. That evening, I told my father.

My father said, "Why?"

I told him the story why.

"Oh, that's funny."

The following morning, he went up to this bell house, and he told George Steel, who ran the plantation. God, he ran this place like a fist. He was nice man, but there wasn't a dozen, boy, he was the outside boss. From field to everything. He was really a smart man.

So, my father said, "The other day, Old Man Jules told my boy, 'You go home. No more job.'"

He say, "Yeah? What happened?"

So, he told 'em.

"Well, you tell the boy come see me tomorrow morning."

So I went up, see him. The next morning, I took my lunch can with me, I went there.

He told me, "What happened?"

I told him what happened.

He told me, "Don't pay attention to that old man. He's too old. You go work."

From there, that's where I went to the Chinese gang. Now I recall. Which was a blessing. That I remember. (Laughs)

WN: That's why you went to the Chinese gang?

JP: Well, he gave me another---George Steel was the boss. Where he told you to go work, you go work. You get what I mean, eh? He was a straight-shooting old man. I remember when--well, I was already [working] in the [plantation] stores--he used to run around with a Buick. Every year, they give 'em one new Buick. Plantation car, to run around. At the end of that year, that car is ruined. You know, those days, everything was hand cut. If he wanted to see a

gang, say, 400, 500 feet in the field, he never walked. He rode that car over those bumps and got there. He hold this plantation pretty fast.

WN: You said after that--after you were a water boy--you moved on to the [pineapple] cannery in Pauwela?

JP: Right. Pauwela Cannery.

WN: Why did you leave the water boy job?

JP: Well, when you make thirty-five cents a day [as a water boy], and you get ten cents an hour [in the cannery], you going the other way. Because you get eighty cents [a day]. You know what I mean? In other words, better pay. Let's call it that way. In other words, eight hours and sometimes, overtime. Eighty cents. [As a water boy], you work a whole day, and you get thirty cents.

WN: This was still summertime?

JP: This was all in summer years.

WN: Why didn't more people go work cannery instead of working fields?

JP: They didn't take you until you were certain age, see. After certain age, they would take you. And they would take all the labor they could get during the summer.

WN: How old would you have to be to work in the cannery?

JP: I think they judge you, and I think you should be--if I remember--was fifteen and up. I think I remember one chap by the name of Vincent Rodrigues, unless he fibbed on his Because to me, that bugga, I know he was younger than I was. I don't know, but those days, they didn't check anything. As long as you have the body. Then, my first year I worked up there, I went into a tray boy job. Where the women put these cans. Put pineapple in the cans, put 'em in this tray. Then you take off the tray, you set 'em down, put another tray. Until you get a stack of, maybe, six or seven high.

Then they had a party that used to come by with sort of a small little--what you call--those lifts like. Hand lifts. Hand trucks. And truck 'em away. You took care of about--all depends. If the pineapple was running good--when I mean "good," the pineapple was nice and those Ginacas, when they cut it, they cut it clean, not much and where everything was nice slices--sometimes there were two boys to one counter. Each counter had about ten women working [as packers]. All they did was put pine in. All you did was move this, put new trays in at all times. It was nice, though.

WN: In those days, did the railroad come near Pauwela?

JP: Yeah. Everything was rail in those days. The train came all the way from Kahului, which was Kahului Railroad Company. They went all the way; they brought freight up. Most of the freight came to the stores and to the mill by rail. Whatever went to Paia Store which was here, and the mill oil and stuff, it was sidetracked there. Then the train kept going all the way to Haiku to the cannery. If they had freight, they unload the freight there, they leave the cars there. And the pineapple was loaded in flat cars . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JP: Like I said, all the sugar was loaded on cars, these cars that were specially built with these beams. Sort of V-like boxes. And the sugar was loaded in that. Oh, no, that was afterwards. The sugar was loaded in bags first. Then they were loaded in cars, and that sugar used to go down. After that, it was loaded--they had special boxes, sugar boxes, that they put it on cars. Eventually, they moved it to truck system. After that, which is the new system, which is all by truck. You must see these big trucks. You go down to Kahului Railroad Company, you see all those trucks. They always on the road.

Then, from the cannery--let's go back to the cannery--they used to send a truck around. Come pick up labor. They used to come pick up labor because the cannery started to work at 7 o'clock [a.m.], so they came down the camps and pick up the labor. If you were fortunate enough, you had a seat. If not, you have to stand up. And they take you all the way up. The bad part was when it rained. The way we used to go to Pauwela way, that was all dirt road. There was no macadam road. The trucks swayed one way to the other way.

WN: You were going from Paia to Pauwela?

JP: Paia to Pauwela, to the cannery. It swayed back and forth. You got all wet.

WN: How come you didn't catch the train to go?

JP: The train didn't take labor up there.

WN: Did it take any passengers at all?

JP: No, not up there. Speaking of passengers, when I went to St. Anthony School [in Wailuku], now, the train used to take us to school from Paia. It used be coming down from Haiku way. The coaches. Then they stop at different places, pick up [people] all the way down. It used to go all the way--you know the Beach Road? Sure, you know the Beach Road. What hotel you staying in?

WN: Oh, the Beach---oh, down Kahului.

JP: Yeah. You know the Beach Road, eh? You either can go Wailuku or along that Beach Road. You see that big condominiums over there? Oh, I would say, about 150 to 200 feet inside, the railroad track went like that--that's what they call the lower road--spin right around like that right up to Oh, hell, we didn't walk too much. Was a short, maybe, a five-minute walk, we were in school. And we used to pay, I think it was ten cents a ride.

WN: How long did it take to get from Paia to your school in St. Anthony?

JP: You got me there, but I don't think it took more than half an hour. I doubt. No, I don't think it took more than half an hour at the most. Oh, was nice . . .

WN: How often would it come?

JP: Certain hour. If you miss 'em, it's just too bad for you. You get what I mean? It gets here at certain hour. Of course, the farther away, the earlier you have to catch the train, eh? Then it gets here; then it stops at Camp 1 [Spreckelsville]; it stops at Kahului, right up to the school. That I remember well.

WN: This was just a passenger train? Did it have . . .

JP: Regular railroad train that did that. And at times, they had, maybe, pineapple and stuff like that. I recall one year we were coming home, and there was three cars, I think, three cars loaded with pineapple in boxes to be shipped. Somehow, they got loose way up in Pauwela, something. They got away from the locomotive. We were coming home on this train. The train was trying to catch up with 'em, but the train couldn't catch up with 'em to hook up with 'em to hold back that cars. Because the engineer figured, with the noise and all, the master--what you call this--well, this guy that was in charge of this master station down here, he figured he might going throw the switch to try to divert 'em to go up the hill. So, he couldn't catch up with 'em.

Then he was worried that this train was coming up with all of us kids in it. And they needed two or three coaches coming up. You had no choice, which I think was a wise idea he did. He went over there and threw that side switch to divert that Cars coming down, if nothing would have happened, they would have gone up the hill, see? That's where they used to take the oil and everything. The very unfortunate thing, those cars jumped the track over there. God damn them, those pineapples scattered all over hell. I remember my dad going with his small truck--he had a small little truck--oh, I don't know how far out. I went with him, I remember. Hell, cases of pineapples scattered all over the place. Most of them were smashed and all, but there was nothing wrong with the fruit. It's a good thing he threw that. If not, what would happen to the

train? I know quite a number of us would have got hurt bad, though. That I can tell you.

WN: Okay, I want to talk about the train little more, but maybe later, when we talk about when you're working in the stores. But I guess that I'd like to talk about that a little later, next time.

JP: Yeah, anytime. Anytime, you come by. Of course, let me know when you do. Let me know a day or two in advance.

WN: Sure, sure, sure. Okay. After you worked in the cannery and after you graduated from St. Anthony High School, you started at the HC&S Kahului Store?

JP: I started in what they call the Kahului Store in those days. You see, there was Kahului Store, and there was the M.A. Company Store. Kahului Store was actually more for HC&S. And they were in the wholesale business--Kahului Store. We [Paia Store] were very little wholesale, were more on the retail business. We had order boys, like I said, they go all over to Haiku, Kokomo, Pauwela, Makawao, Olinda, and certain section to Kula, went out take orders and everything. [JP is referring to the Paia Store.]

WN: And that was your first job at the Kahului Store?

JP: My first job was at Kahului Store. I worked there sort of a stock clerk for about a month. Then, Old [Fred] Rosecrans knew my dad well. He seen me, and he asks me where I was working. I told him where I was working. He asked me what I was getting. I told 'em what I was getting.

He told me, "Why don't you come and work for me [Paia Store] and I'll give you"

I think it was either three or five dollars more. Well, I didn't have to worry about transportation; I could walk to work which wasn't far.

WN: I see. Okay, you worked the HC&S Kahului Store first, right? For a month?

JP: HC&S, yeah. Well, actually, no. Strike that. Actually, should be the Kahului Store. That's where I first worked for a month.

WN: It was run by HC&S.

JP: Well, they owned it like.

WN: So, you had to go from your home to Kahului?

JP: Yeah, and I used to ride down with a Japanese boy, see.

He worked in there too, and he told me, "Don't worry, John. You

can ride along with me."

And I paid 'em two dollars a month. That's all he asked. That I remember.

WN: So this Rosecrans was a M.A. Company?

JP: He was M.A. Company.

Then he offered to me, "Come and work for me, and I'll give you"

Either three or five dollars more. That's pretty good because close [location], everything, which I did. Figuring that I was going, you know, I didn't ask him what kind of a job. Well, hell, when I got there the following day, I gave my boss, who was Old Man Spark, notice.

He told me, "Well, John, you report to an old man by the name of [Manuel] Jardine."

So I went and report to him. He was in charge of the delivery side. Unloading freight, delivery. So, he put me on the truck delivering merchandise.

WN: This is for . . .

JP: For M.A. Company, now. And delivered, anyway, like these places I mentioned--Kokomo, and all of those places. I worked in there, I think, for about a year. Still under that. Then I went into what they call--they had boys that go out and take orders. Oh, they had--I think I would say--good, about four of them. Some Japanese, and some other boys. We went into the camps about the--well, all depend where we would, Makawao, we went early--but in the neighborhood of around the twentieth of each month. We went to this individual homes, and they gave us what they called a "new month order." And [for] that merchandise, we brought those bills in.

Jardine had about five boys back there [in the store]. All they did was put out those merchandise, put 'em in boxes. When this bunch of merchandise was Because you figure [how much the] wagon can take. Then, if you took the orders in the twentieth in that camp--maybe Makawao--then that merchandise was delivered, maybe around the twenty-second. You [the customer] don't pay for that merchandise until end of the following month. In other words, merchandise that's taken on order on January the twentieth and they deliver the merchandise to you on the twenty-second, that's considered merchandise you buy in February. Because, if not, you couldn't cover the whole area, you know. Oh, I had the tremendous . . .

WN: If you ordered something on January 20, you wouldn't have to pay until February 20 [end of February]?

JP: Right. You don't. But, once they deliver the merchandise to you

Let's say that they delivered the merchandise to you on the twenty-second. Anything from that date on you buy, that's considered all February purchase. You get what I mean? And you don't pay for that until the following payday [i.e., March 1]. That's how it works. Then from there, I went into the office.

WN: Okay. Wait, just a minute. I want to keep talking about this delivering, okay?

JP: Sure. Go ahead, go ahead.

WN: You said on the twentieth of each month, you would go into . . .

JP: It all depended on the days in the month. If it's a longer month, [you go] maybe [on the] twenty, twenty-first. And once you start taking orders, that's continuously until you cover all the camps.

WN: You had so many camps to cover. So, what? You would do like Haiku on the twentieth, or . . .

JP: We had a special boy going out that way, see, all the time.

WN: So then, all through from January 20 to February 20, you were actually taking orders?

JP: Right. With all these different camps. So, the merchandise could be put up and delivered to all the camps not later than maybe the twenty-seventh, or twenty-eighth of the month. You get what I mean? Whoever started that system, I don't think he was very smart. Because if they would start taking orders on the first and delivering on the first, boy, if they start taking orders on the twentieth and delivering on the twentieth, would practically be the same thing, eh? You get what I mean? No more days between, yeah?

WN: But could they get the merchandise ready in time?

JP: That's the part. No, we couldn't. That's why I think whoever did that, see.

WN: For example, you would go to, say, Makawao on the twentieth; and then you would go to, say, Waiakoa on the twenty-fifth; or Old Kailua on the twenty-eighth. And it's spaced out from that?

JP: Yeah. Right, right. But, you see, we had four big trucks. So, maybe we would deliver in Skill Village. Let's say we would deliver in Skill Village on the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth. Maybe that same day, maybe Haiku, Pauwela, Haiku and Kokomo would be delivered in the same day. Because we had these huge trucks.

WN: Oh, you had four trucks.

JP: Yeah, we had four huge trucks, and we had one three-quarter ton

truck. That's all we had. But when we start delivering into Paia Camp, one truck, for instance, you had all the groceries. Let's say you was a truck driver. You helping. You had all the groceries. You go to this house, you go to the next house. You knew who the people were. You dig all this merchandise out and take it there. The other truck would come before or after you and deliver. All he did was deliver what we call the bulk merchandise. Rice, feed, all sort of that bag stuff--heavy merchandise. That truck, that's all he did. When he got through with that, he went back [to the store]; get another load; continue going, see. Once if he catch up, or if we're falling behind, he would take small merchandise, and also deliver.

You used to check the merchandise. These boxes were about 2-1/2 feet by---not quite, maybe 2 feet by 2-1/2 feet. The merchandise were put in there in reverse. The last house goes in first, right? In all these boxes. So, when you start with the first house, you hit the first box. The truck used to take about twelve boxes.

WN: One truck took twelve boxes?

JP: Twelve boxes of stuff. When you got to the house, well, you had the bills. You check off. That went on, oh, I don't know how many years. Then Young Moodie changed that. When you were checking merchandise that was going in these boxes, you waited on one. In other words, if it was Mr. Smith's, or Mr. Nakasone's, or Mr. Gouveia's groceries, if you got the bill You took these bills, and it was Mr. Smith. You check off Mr. Smith's groceries, and you put 'em in paper boxes.

We used to have, oh, paper boxes by the hundreds. You know those days, everything paper boxes. We never threw 'em away. And if it [i.e., one order] took two, or three boxes--made no difference. No more room here, we close that box. You know, how you can interlock 'em. Maybe use two boxes, maybe use three boxes. You write the name on--"Nakasone." You know what I mean? Those bills were all marked beforehand. They put a number on. Let's say they put number eight on. So, at the end of the bill when you get through, "number eight--three boxes." So when you got to Nakasone's place, you look at the bill. He's got three boxes. You have piled that boxes in your wagon in order. All you do is grab these three boxes. You and your helper. You grab these three boxes and take the boxes and drop 'em where the housewife tell you--on the table, leave it there on the floor. You didn't check anything. Your number was on that bill that you checked.

Maybe they come back and say, "Hey, I was a can of corned beef short" or "I was a can of Vienna sausage short." No questions asked. Just give 'em the can.

But if you come back--like we had a few people afterwards--you come back, "Hey, corned beef hash. Ah, I was two cans short, four cans short." You give 'em.

Next thing you know, come by again, "Hey, I was one can corned beef [short]."

You figure, "God." You know what I mean? Hey, that how all the time. So, what happened? Mr. Gouveia, oh, okay. Hey, I got Gouveia's bill. You [referring to the helper] and I check it, and put the merchandise in that box, and seal it.

When he come back, and he tell me, "Hey, I'm this short."

"I'm sorry. Two of us---two people checked. We know that merchandise was in there."

"Hey, maybe I missed."

WN: Did you have to do that often? Check on the people?

JP: Well, there were only a few we did. Very few. But the lost and the saving of time more than paid for it. There wasn't too much of that dinking around, you know. It wasn't too much. Which was a beautiful system.

And then during the week, we used to go into the camps. I remember Paia Camp, we used to go in Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Practically all the camps had three-times delivery. During the weeks. They did that system, also. So, during the week, when you take the merchandise to Mr. Smith's house, wasn't hardly any--just a small box, eh? You went deliver by yourself. You didn't need a helper because it's small merchandise.

WN: I see. You said Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, you would go into Paia. So, you would go to different houses in Paia Camp?

JP: Whoever gave us orders. They come down the store, and they place the orders too heavy for them to carry [home]. We'll deliver.

Maybe some come down, and they say, "I need this merchandise badly. I get nothing home."

So, we'll take it late this afternoon. Afternoon, you always find a little time. You run over there and back again.

WN: This is the Paia Camp. What about the others . . .

JP: All the camps. All the camps, we used to work. Makawao, we used to go. I think Makawao was Wednesday and Saturday.

WN: This is delivery?

JP: Small delivery--weekly delivery.

WN: Oh, I see. So, that's different from the one that you go . . .

JP: Yeah, that's different. That's different, now. That's what you call "new month order." Take and delivery. This is every week delivery.

WN: So all the M.A. Company camps got a new month order and a weekly delivery?

JP: Weekly deliveries. That's how the thing work.

WN: But these weekly deliveries, the order boy wouldn't go out to them?

JP: No, no, no, no. They [i.e., customers] come down to the store. If they have a telephone, they telephone. Or they send a note down by their youngsters. Where the front counter, all the people used to come in and buy their own merchandise. And they [i.e., clerks] write it all up and send it back to the delivery department. They put it up and deliver. That's how most of those things worked.

WN: I see. You said that taking orders is one job and delivering is another job.

JP: One guy takes orders. That's all he does--take orders. New month time. After [new month time is over], he works inside. Put up orders. You know, whatever job it is. In addition to that, with some of the truck drivers and the boys that put up the orders, they had to unload the freight. Freight all came from Kahului inside box cars. These cars were, oh gosh, they were good size. Locomotive go right into the building. No way of [the merchandise] getting wet. And they unload all that merchandise and stack 'em. We carried quite a number of merchandise.

WN: What job did you like better? Taking orders or delivering?

JP: Well, I think that the job that I like better was the job that I actually was trained for in the office. See, Tom Dye was the head bookkeeper. There was another chap by the name of Masaru Morikawa who died. He was assistant. He had his job to do. You see, was him; Morikawa was assistant; I was assistant to Tom Dye. And I had my job to do, which was filing of bills, waiting on customers.

WN: Right. You were taking orders and delivering from 1926 to 1935?

JP: Roughly around there.

WN: Okay. So then, 1935, that's when you went into the office?

JP: That's when I went to the office for a number of years.

WN: You said that's the job that you were trained for. How were you trained?

JP: I took up bookkeeping stuff in [high] school, see. That's why. I

was trained for that. Which I liked it very much. I think, outside of that, when I went out assistant dry goods manager and stuff like that, it wasn't bad. I liked that job, but you know how people complain. You get what I mean? It wasn't a bad job, but sometimes, complaints. Those guys come down--ignorant buggas, you know--they just raise Cain for nothing. When in the end, they know, themselves, was wrong.

WN: Okay. Let me back up just a little bit now. You said you took bookkeeping in high school?

JP: Right. St. Anthony.

WN: What made you decide to go into bookkeeping? Did you know that you were going to do this type of work eventually?

JP: Well, outside of working in the fields You know what I mean? I was thinking after I graduate, I sure as heck didn't want to go to the field work. So I felt that if I took up bookkeeping, I felt I had a better chance of finding a job in Wailuku or Kahului. That's why I took bookkeeping. So, that's why I really took that. But, truthly speaking, I think the worst job that I hated was when I became manager [of Paia Store].

WN: Okay. That comes a little later. Okay. After you were delivering and taking orders and so forth, you said in 1935 you started working in the office. How did you actually get that position?

JP: Well, I got that job through a party that got sick by the name of Yoshihara. He worked in the office, I would say, maybe twenty or more years. He got sick. I went to the office. When he came back, he couldn't go back to the office. His mind wasn't all there. So, they stuck him in the men's wear department. My God, he was a nuisance. His mind wasn't there complete. Then, finally, he committed suicide. I remember him because we took chances watching him in Lower Paia Hospital. You see, these plantations, they each one had their own hospitals and doctors. And he slit his throat. But he didn't cut a jugular vein, and was pretty bad. We used to take turns at night, go watch him. You know, two at a time. He used to talk to us--he had one valve over here.

WN: Oh, on his throat.

JP: On his throat. Without the valve, all you (tape garbled). You close the valve, "Hey, how you? You fine, everything." I not kidding. He used to close the valve all the time. So, finally, he got gangrene. Doctor took it off, and he died. Oh, he was a nice guy before prior to getting sick.

WN: Was he the bookkeeper?

JP: No, no, no. He was an assistant, also. He was an assistant just like Morikawa was. Tom Dye was the bookkeeper.

WN: I see. So, you started in the office as an assistant to Tom Dye. Assistant bookkeeper?

JP: Well, assistant bookkeeper. There was Tom Dye, the bookkeeper. Masaru Morikawa was the one, and I was the other. We had, I would say, in the neighborhood of 3,000 accounts or plus. Maybe little more. Was strictly more on retail business. When the war broke out, we were forced into the wholesale business.

WN: Okay. So you worked in the office until 1939?

JP: Yeah, around there. Nineteen thirty-nine [1939]. Around there.

WN: What happened after that?

JP: Then, I came outside. I went to the grocery department because Ben Ambrose, who was the grocery manager, was sort of on a not-too-healthy list. Then--I don't know, I would say, two, three years--then the war broke out. Old Man Moodie was manager then. His son was assistant, too, in the dry goods department. He went down God, was it the OPS or OPA [Office of Price Administration]? Control, you know, of the prices, and rationing of gas, and all. That's when I went from the grocery into the dry goods department.

WN: When you were grocery manager . . .

JP: I was assistant grocery manager.

WN: Assistant grocery manager. How did you get that promotion?

JP: Well, I think I had the qualifications from the office. I was a conscientious worker. I'm a firm believer, even until today, whoever has a job should do his job right. I think Ben Ambrose went to the manager and told me. That's how I got the job.

WN: What were your duties as assistant grocery manager?

JP: Grocery manager? Well, see that the shelves were well stacked. See that customers were taken proper care. Merchandise short, report to the buyer, who was Mon Nakano. And stuff like that. Old Man Shoda was a buyer, too. My primary duties were interesting, and . . .

WN: There's grocery department, and what were the other departments in the store?

JP: You mean all the departments in the store? They had the order department--filling of orders. That's one. Grocery department, men's furnishing, drug department, dry goods department, Japanese department. That's . . .

WN: Japanese department?

JP: Yeah, they had one Japanese department.

WN: What type of things would they have in there?

JP: Well, when they spoke of the Japanese department, it was sort of split. The groceries was next to the billing---filling-up order counters. And where I speaking, this was in the old dry goods section. The Japanese department was separate, and we had a boy by the name of Nagata. Nagata. Yeah, he ran that. We carried silks; we carried Fuji--all Japan-made merchandise. I'm speaking prior to the war, now. Oh, heck, all those slippers, chopsticks, obi cloths. Yeah, all those things that go, eh? Oh, hell, we had a nice department with Japanese merchandise.

WN: How about foods? How about Japanese foods?

JP: Quite a bit. Quite a bit. But that was one other section, see? You know what I mean? Because not too many Japanese people came to the store--I'm speaking of ladies, and stuff like that--go to the front counter and buy Japanese merchandise. Most of those were strictly when they take orders.

In the grocery department, you name 'em, we had it. Used to come--I'll never forget this--rakkyō, ume, nara-zuke, all in those wooden tubs. Oh, you name 'em, we had 'em. They used to buy all that stuff.

WN: Where did they buy those things from?

JP: Strictly through buyers in Honolulu. We didn't buy anything out of---well, there was something from Japan. But they had people that came in and took orders for that merchandise. I don't know who.

WN: You said that the Japanese hardly came into the store to buy . . .

JP: There were some. Some came in, but not too many. But most of our Japanese groceries, now, mostly were by order taking and stuff like that. Oh, there were some, but in comparison--let's use a hundred as a figure--if 100 people came in the store, I would say, maybe, about ten. You know, those days, a man go to work 4:30 in the morning, he doesn't get home until 4:30, 5:00, 5:30 [p.m.]. The store close 5 o'clock. So, there wasn't [time for] that, you know. That I know. But the Japanese dry goods department was always busy with Japanese ladies.

WN: Oh, they went into the store?

JP: They came down into the store, and they bought American-made merchandise and plenty Japanese merchandise. This boy by the name of Nagata--in case they wanted certain kind of stuff in cans, you know, anything you could think of--he would go get it and bring it

over. In those days, everything went one bill. They didn't care. Nothing was, say, this strictly Japanese merchandise. Oh, this is strictly drugs. Heck, no. You buy some drugs, you want to buy dry goods and put all on the same bill. You know what I mean?

WN: So, they just charged everything?

JP: They just charge the whole thing. Not like today, eh. Today, they have all these fancy computers, you know. Everything is by numbers and all different things. Want to know how much drugs you sell; how much this. No, there wasn't anything like that.

WN: If someone came into the store on, say, January 18 and bought things, he would be billed for January . . .

JP: He would still be billed for January.

WN: So that he'd have to pay on January . . .

JP: He have to pay at the end of January, early February. He doesn't get paid until the end of January. But anything--let's say that they delivered that merchandise, say, on the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh of the month, January, now--anything from there on he buys, he's going to be billed in February. And he doesn't have to pay that merchandise until March--early March. Again, it falls back. You follow what I mean?

WN: So, if lot of people who depended on the order taking, then actually, they never really had to go inside the store then.

JP: Well, plenty of them never. I remember, my mother, very, very well. Of course, she had my sisters and I, my brother. I don't think she went to that store more than once. I'm not exaggerating. I'm telling you the truth.

WN: How far away did she live from the store?

JP: My dad had a car. Well, of course, we lived--I would say--about from here to Lower Paia. What's that? About half a mile. That's not far to walk [to the store]. And there was quite a number of people, they never went. Yeah. They never went. I remember many and many a time walking home.

Somebody say, "Hey, John, you go past so-and-so's house?"

"Yeah."

"Hey, they need this badly. Take it."

Not heavy, you know. Used to walk. I wasn't living too far. I delivered the merchandise, eh? You know what I mean. Do 'em a favor. Do them a favor and, hell, you make another friend, eh? That I remember well.

WN: How did they know what was in the store, then?

JP: Who?

WN: The customers . . .

JP: God, that store, shee. (Chuckles) That store have everything under the sun. I'm not kidding. They had everything under the sun that you could practically think of. I'm not kidding you.

You know, as months go by, years go by, you go there take orders. See, like you take the Japanese camp. We sent the Japanese order taker in there because plenty of those people were the old-timers yet. Not the young generation. I don't blame 'em. They talk their own lingo.

"You get this?"

"Yeah, we have."

"Oh, one or two cans."

Hey, first thing you know, the neighbors talking, eh? "Oh, they get this over there in that store. You order." Word goes by, by mouth.

WN: What if you got something new? How would you tell them that, oh, this

JP: Well, the order boy, he wasn't stupid. If he was a smart boy, he recommend lot of stuff. I used to remember, we used to go take orders. Let's say that I go to this Frankel's house. I been there already five or six months taking order. Knock at the door.

"Oh, you going take orders."

"Yeah, I coming take orders already."

"Come in. Sit down." Or some, right on the steps, you sit down. You know already, the family, eh?

"One bag rice."

"Yeah."

"One bag, scratch feed."

She tell you, "Yeah."

"One can 7 o'clock coffee or coffee."

"Yeah." You know, more or less, what down the line.

Bumbai, you stay make, "One bag flour."

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait." She go check her flour.

"No, I think I get enough flour for little while."

You practically--ten, fifteen items--you know what she going buy already. That's right down the line.

WN: So you never have to understand Japanese?

JP: No, no. I'm speaking of the English-speaking people. And the Japanese people, whoever took Japanese orders, he did the same thing. Because if you come to my house and take orders and my wife give you these orders down the line, you know, about four, five times, you know what, more or less, big items we going buy, eh? You know what I mean. Coffee, rice, sugar, flour--right down the line, see.

And don't just say white sugar. "No, no, no."

It's brown sugar they want. "All right."

WN: So, they would get Japanese-speaking order boys?

JP: Yes sir, they were Japanese-speaking.

WN: How about Ilocano?

JP: Yeah. We had Filipino boys. We had. I can mention the names to you--Mariano Reyes [another interviewee] was one order boy. And a Filipino boy by the name of Juan. I don't know his second name. J-O-A-N, I think. That's how they spell 'em. They were order boys.

WN: Did you have a Filipino department in the store?

JP: No, we never had. Of course, we carried a few Filipino merchandise. Iriko, dry fish, which the Japanese people bought. Quite a few. And so did the other people buy some of that. That I remember very, very well. But, you know, the Filipinos, they used to go take orders. Was same system, but they bought very little. A Filipino bought very little those days.

WN: Why do you think that was? Was it was because there were other ways to get . . .

JP: Well, when they came over here--I'm pretty sure you heard many and many a time--they say a Filipino can live on grass. I believe. He'll eat potato shoots, he'll eat pumpkin shoots. He'll eat almost any kind of a shoot. He live on . . . I don't know if you know what is parya [bitter melon]. I don't know the English name.

I try it. Son-of-a-gun thing is goddamed bitter, it's pitiful.

And all they bought was salt. Little package or two of dried fish. Half bag rice, if he's single. They never bought coffee, they never bought dried milk. I tell you the facts.

WN: Were there stores around that sold Filipino goods?

JP: There were some stores in Lower Paia had some Filipino merchandise. Like---oh, God, I trying to see if I can think of one. No, I can't right now. But the Filipino merchandise was, at that time, was strictly more dried fish and stuff like that.

There's another thing that maybe if you're going to insert in there. When way back, plantation used to bring labor in from the Philippines. They guarantee 'em. They come out here; they work so long. They guarantee a passage back home. Free. When they arrived over here, like the M.A. Company--the other plantations had it--but I know of M.A. Company, they used to bring anywhere from twenty-five to fifty people, Filipinos. Practically all single men. Then afterwards, they used to import their wives. When they first came here, they had these long houses where they housed them. You know, kitchen outside. Long houses, ten to fifteen rooms, each guy got a room. Bathroom outside.

They gave 'em half bag of rice. They gave 'em one package of fish. If he has family, well, they give him little more. One package of fish, and one package of salt. Now I cannot recall if they gave that outright, or they deducted that from their salary. That, I cannot tell you offhand. But I do know, never worked the day they just arrived. You know, they housed them there. They got to eat, eh? That's how the thing worked.

WN: And credit for everybody was deducted from their paycheck?

JP: No, not all. Depends. Certain people were deducted, certain people was not deducted. As long as you paid your bill, they didn't deduct anything from you, with the exception if you went and draw coupons, they deducted that.

WN: So then, the M.A. Company plantation store would take The customer wouldn't have to pay right away?

JP: No, no, no, no.

WN: But they would get a bill at the end . . .

JP: They would get a bill at the end of the month. And you come down and pay it.

WN: Oh, so it wouldn't be out of people's paychecks?

JP: No, no, no. But, you know how people like to run those balances.

Then first thing you know, they clamp you down because you got a balance to pay. First thing you know, you running back. They make some kind of arrangements that they deduct it from your check. But they will not deduct it from your check unless you don't pay. That I remember very, very well.

WN: As assistant manager of the grocery department, did you have to deal with wholesalers at all?

JP: No, no. We didn't go into the wholesale business . . .

WN: No. I mean, when you were retailing, did you have to deal with the wholesalers that supplied you with your goods?

JP: Oh, no. Ben Ambrose took care of that. Once a month, they used to go up to the building where we stored our merchandise. The manager, Old Man Shoda, Ben Ambrose . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

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WN: You were talking about the wholesaling?

JP: Yeah, I was. You were talking about the store. Like I said, the manager, Old Man Shoda, Ben Ambrose, Mon Nakano. Mon Nakano was sort of a secretary-like. Kept his records. They had their book. Then they knew that the day before, the guy in charge of the warehouse took an inventory and entered in that book. The next day when they went up there, we knew what we had on hand; we knew what was coming in; and we knew approximately how much we use a month. They placed orders with different companies--merchandise to be delivered within a month. Mon used to go down, type all those orders out.

For instance, we say that we had thirty cases of corned beef. On hand, we had thirty cases. We use ten or fifteen cases a month. So we know we had over two months' supply, right? Then they order another thirty cases. We always were ahead a month, see? When that merchandise came in, we still had merchandise for about a month. Certain amounts were couple of cases, but certain amounts were pretty good.

You know, I remember that store, 3,000 bags of rice in an order was nothing to say we not going order that. We had our own fumigating room that we used to store our rice in there for fear that, sometimes, bugs might hit 'em, eh? So, we gave 'em no chance. We used to stack anywhere from 1,500 bags to 3,000 bags of rice. That's a lot of rice, you know, for the number of people. Actually, you know how people is. They turn, and turn, and turn. I'm pretty sure that if you go back and check your parents--like I can check mine--heck, they eat very little rice. I mean, very little bread,

right? Now, it's the reverse. They eat more bread than they eat rice. I'm pretty sure of that. I know in the beginning, rice--you know, what the hell--rice was practically bread.

WN: How many wholesalers would you say that the store dealt with?

JP: Gosh, we have quite a number. I'm speaking this is after the war. When war broke out, then we were forced into the wholesale business. So was the Kahului Store. We dealt with quite a number of people-- Lower Paia, Haiku had some stores, Makawao had a few, Kula had a few. I would say. Then, lot of stores from Kahului and Wailuku. Kahului didn't have the merchandise. They came up too, eh? I think if you put---dealing with fifty wasn't too high a figure to say. That I remember.

You know, if the war didn't break out, honest, I think the manager would have been fired. We had over \$3 million worth of merchandise on hand. We had merchandise scattered from hell to doomsday. Coming in, you know, merchandise was coming in, and stuff like that. Hey, God, we had merchandise, unbelievable, boy. There wasn't room. When the war broke out, God, the manager was sitting pretty. Because after about six months or five months after that, you hardly got merchandise from the Mainland. I mean, all of the Japanese submarines were all over the place--which in wartime, everything is fair. You know what I mean? So, we had the merchandise. Oh, we really had the merchandise.

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and
STOREKEEPERS of
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

Volume I

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